Solidarity Not Scapegoating

criminality, immigration, and the real crisis.

a tabloid of the toronto coalition against racism

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In your hands you have *Solidarity not Scapegoating*, the latest campaign tabloid of the Toronto Coalition Against Racism (TCAR). Over the past year we have organized with communities to stop the hatred and backlash against immigrants, refugees and people of colour. Along the way we have also organized against police violence, the far right, media bias, economic inequality and other forms of systemic racism.

As we work together with different constituencies and issues, our goal as a coalition is to "make the links". That is, show how people's lives and political struggles intertwine with others so that we can work together for common goals.

Recently, the links have been much easier to connect. Since the shooting at the *Just Desserts* cafe, the agendas of "law and order" and Reform Party-like immigration policy have come together to create a nasty little stew that includes Immigration Canada, the police force, local and national politicians and the corporate-owned media. Together, these forces have decided that immigration is an issue of crime control and that crime is a result of immigration.

Everyone from the local police coroner to airline staff has been part of the debate in saying who should come into this country and who shouldn't. But what about our voices - the voices of the First Nations, Black, South Asian, Latin American, East Asian, Arab, Jewish, lesbian and gay, feminist and anti-racist communities?

We must remember that any serious anti-racist analysis around immigration must acknowledge that First Nations sovereignty and independence is part of our struggle. This country was colonized by European invaders which has left a legacy of genocide against First Nations people—destroying languages, whole communities and ways of life. Although aboriginal people have inhabitated the Americas for millenia, white European policy-makers (unwanted "settlers" themselves) are the ones labelling everyone else as immigrants.

In this publication, we aim to build unity among our communities to counter the right-wing backlash. Our campaign **Solidarity not Scapegoating** looks at three main areas.

Inside

what's up Marchi?.....2
deportations 3
public consultations.....3
a real example 3
pull-out calendar.....4,5
policing.....6
police state.....6
race-based statistics 6
media.....7
our demands 8
TCAR info 8

Firstly we ask, **who are the real criminals?** The way those in power have constructed what is crime and who is a criminal in our society has always taken aim at the Black community. More prisons, inhumane and racist methods of policing and the stereotyping of Black people in popular culture and media are the staples of this agenda.

Now immigration policy in this country is catering to this notion of criminality with Black immigrants and refugees as the main target. Other communities such as First Nations, Vietnamese, Sikh, Middle Eastern and Chinese also face this burden of criminality whenever it is useful to pass regressive government policies. The articles in this issue—**race-based statistics, the police, the police state and the media**—outline how crime is constructed and how the law-and-order agenda works against those with little power or say in this society.

Secondly, we look at how immigration is shaped around this notion of **criminality.** In the 1980's, the Tories were infamous for stirring up the public's emotions against immigrants and refugees. The former government was known for referring to newcomers as "queue-jumpers" and "bogus" applicants. They introduced Bill C-86, which made it easier to reject immigrants and refugees. The bill, which is now law, has made it possible to fine airlines for having passengers without the proper passport identification.

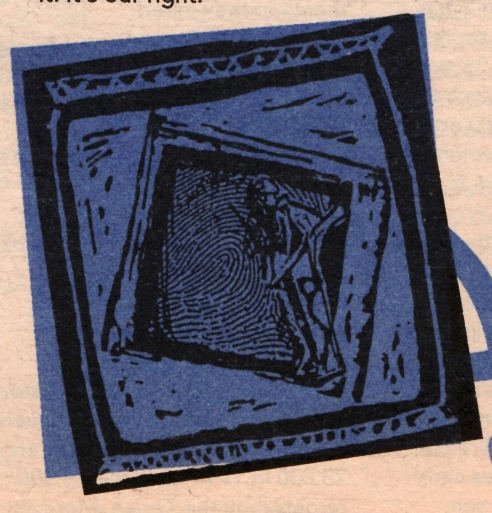
The Liberals have been in power for a little over a year and have followed the same path as their predecessors by slashing the target numbers of refugees, introducing fees for refugee applicants and setting up a task force working with the RCMP to police the refugee and immigrant population. Immigration Minister Sergio Marchi will be introducing a whole series of mechanisms in the House of Parliament this fall to deport people even if they have lived in this country for most of their lives. He has also hinted that he may restrict family-class immigrants, prevent children born in this country from obtaining citizenship status and implement compulsory HIV-testing for all immigrants and refugees. Read the articles **deportations, public consultations,** and **what's up Marchi?** to find out more about how immigration policy is decided in this country.

And thirdly, while immigration and crime are presented as a crisis situation and blamed for the economic despair we've been experiencing for years, **the real crisis** often goes unnamed. TCAR believes it is economic policies such as the North American Free Trade Agreement, social cutbacks, corporations who pay little or no taxes and grossly unequal distribution of wealth and power that are the real crisis. Add to this a racist policing and justice system and little democratic control over our lives and the real crisis becomes crystal clear. The heat is on people of colour, the immigrant population, poor people and working people as we get blamed for the economic and political crises.

So what should we do with all this information? Taking charge of our lives can be hard when much of it is controlled by other people. And after facing this type of control and manipulation for years, we sometimes give up and think this is the way it has to be.

But we have to regain the confidence that it is our right to have democratic control over institutions that affect our lives. That it is our right to be represented fairly in the media. That it is our right to be free from living in a police state. That it is the right of refugees to seek solace away from war and poverty. That it is our right to have a job that offers us security and creativity.

In our **strategy** article, TCAR offers information on our campaign over the next few months, demands, alternative policies and ways for you to get involved. Take charge and challenge racism and oppression around you—when you see it, when you hear it, when you feel it. It's our right!



Solidarity not Scapegoating

what's up Marchi?

Immigration Minister out-Reforming the Reform Party

· Marchi is no friend of ours.

When Sergio Marchi became Minister of Citizenship and Immigration after the last election, he went out of his way to argue that he would provide a different direction on immigration and refugee policies than his Tory predecessors. He lied.

While opposition critic, Marchi was often the 'friend' of mainstream immigrant and refugee advocates. He often opposed the many setbacks for immigrants and refugees enacted by the Tories.

Marchi has headed in a different direction since the election. One that is taking him away from the immigration advocates he had supported and into the arms of the Reform Party.

No friend of refugees

Marchi promised to be the 'friend' refugees never had under the Tories. He sympathetically refers to his own immigrant roots as an Argentinean-born son of Italian immigrant parents to justify his regressive policy changes. We only have to look at Marchi's record since the election to know that he is no friend of ours.

The Tories enacted policies, such as Bill C-86, that made it more difficult for refugees to get into Canada and claim refugee status. The provisions of this bill, which came into effect in 1992, extended the arbitrary powers of low-level immigration officials and others such as airline staff to deny access to refugee claimants. Canadian immigration officials in other countries were given the power to deny anyone refugee status if they had been charged with a crime in any country (even if it involves political prisoners).

Access was further restricted by allowing only those refugees that fly directly to Canada to make a claim. Those that land or have a stop-over in what is considered a 'safe middle country' (e.g., the transfer lounge in a airport) must claim refugee status there.

Chretien and Marchi strongly opposed Bill C-86 while they were in opposition. Their tune has now changed.

Marchi has maintained all the provisions of C-86 except one—refugees are now able to apply for work permits. Not only has he maintained all other regressive provisions of Bill C-86 such as requiring that refugees be finger-printed and photo-ID'ed, but his recent announcements make Bill C-86 look tame in comparison.

In the wake of the anti-immigrant and racist hysteria whipped up in the last few months, Marchi announced fourteen new policies that will be debated in Parliament this fall.

Landed immigrants and refugees who are convicted of crimes carrying maximum sentences of ten years and are ordered deported will lose the right to appeal. This is regardless of their actual sentence or how long they have lived in Canada.

A special appeal may be made to the Minister of Immigration and Citizenship but this leaves many people vulnerable to the arbitrary powers of the Minister who, as we have seen, succumbs to the prevailing winds of anti-refugee and immigrant sentiments. The new policies will also deny citizenship to any landed immigrant or refugee who has two summary convictions of six months in Canada or abroad, regardless of when or what the convictions were about.

The Reform Party calls for the use of the 'notwithstanding' provision of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms to deny refugees the basic right of appeal that all citizens currently have. This would prevent immigrants and refugees the right to appeal decisions and seek protection under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Provisions are also made to give immigration officials arbitrary powers to search and seize international mail if suspected of containing 'false identification papers.'

What is so dangerous about Marchi's new policies is that they begin to erode the basic human rights of certain communities—immigrants and refugees—to be protected by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. With these new policies, Marchi will cement in legislation the racist equation of 'immigrants and refugees = criminals'. Marchi's pandering to the right wing and Reform party's racist 'law and order' agenda will have a serious impact on immigrants and refugees and must be opposed.

Out-Reforming the Reform Party

Not only has Marchi maintained and extended many of the retrograde Tory policies on refugees, his actions since coming into power are remarkably Reform Partyesque.

The Reform Party calls for accepting only those refugees who qualify under the strict requirements of the United Nations Convention on Refugees. Thus, they oppose the Designated Refugees Class which was enacted in 1978 to include those refugees that are in refugee-like situations but do not meet the U.N. Convention definition. Marchi has made some disturbing moves in this direction.

Marchi promised to be the 'friend' refugees never had under the Tories.

One of his first acts as Minister was to slash refugee target levels by 35 per cent to approximately 28,000 in 1994 from the 44,000 targeted by the Tories. More significantly, Marchi is making policy changes that differentiate Convention and Designated Class refugees.

Marchi recently announced that Designated Class refugees would no longer be able to collect the food, clothing and housing allowance provided for resettlement while Convention refugees will still be able to collect this allowance.

Marchi has reversed Canada's long-standing practice of refusing to deport refugees to unsafe countries such as China, Bosnia, Somalia, Iraq, Iran, Sri Lanka, El Salvador, Ethiopia and Guatemala. For now, only deportation orders to Rwanda, Burundi, Afghanistan and Haiti will be put on hold. An exception is being made for thousands of refugees whose claims were rejected but have been in Canada for three years. Yet criteria are excessively restrictive and will exclude many claimants. In particular, those unable to find work (recall that refugees have only been allowed to work in the past 6 months), those who have collected welfare, pose a 'health care burden' or have a criminal record (regardless of what charge) will not be allowed to stay in Canada.

Who's allowed in / Who's left out

The Reform Party opposes any immigration policy based on 'race or creed', arguing that Canada needs a policy based on economic need. That is, immigrants that "possess the human capital necessary to adjust quickly and independently to the needs of Canadian society and the job market." Here, too, we have seen Marchi pandering to the right wing.

In Marchi's 1994 Immigration Plan, he kept the Tories' changes to the point system (used to accept or reject immigrants) to give more points for educational and skill levels and ability to speak English and French, arguing that he wants "newcomers who can make an immediate economic contribution to Canada".

Study after study has demonstrated that immigrants make a net contribution to Canadian society, putting more into the system through taxes and economic activity than through the services they consume. So what is this about?

It is about limiting the immigration of people of colour into the country and promoting racist and sexist assumptions about the "family class" category.

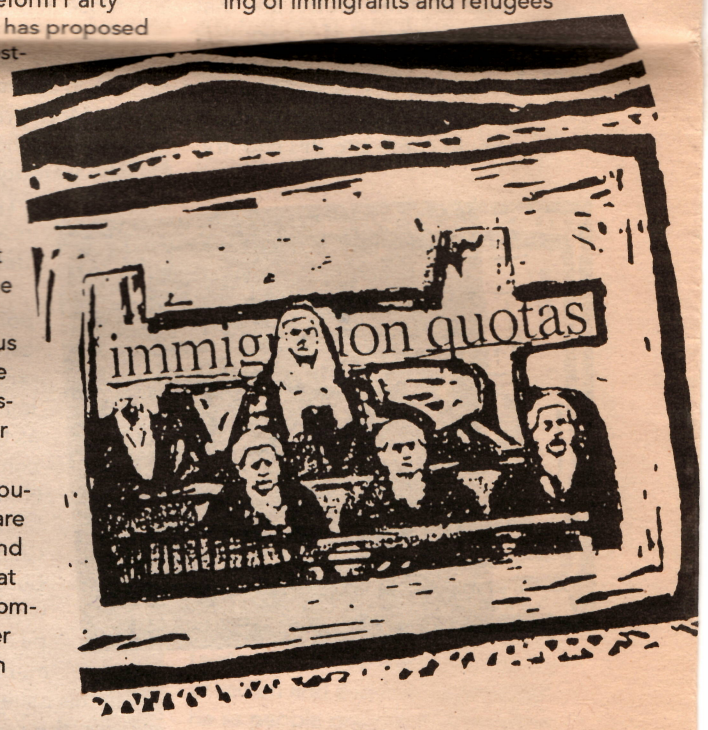
Marchi is keeping the Tory's restrictions on sponsoring independent or married children under family class. He has also raised the possibility of further restrictions on the sponsorship of parents of married and independent children.

This lays bare the many problems with the way that 'family' is constructed through immigration policy. The very narrow definition of family as being the nuclear, heterosexual 'ma, pa and kids' is racist and homophobic. It does not address the different realities of 'family' which may include same sex partners or an extended family network that is integral to the social and economic well-being of its members.

In addition, the notion that family-class immigrants are somehow non-productive or a drain on society while independent class immigrants contribute to the economy is false. Whether it is a grandmother providing free child care or a sister-in-law that is working and contributing to the family income, all people pay taxes on things consumed and provide labour (paid or not paid). Marchi has consistently remained silent on the demand that lesbians and gay men be allowed to sponsor their partners under family class. Nor has he made any commitment to recognize refugees at risk because of their sexual orientation.

Compulsory HIV Testing

In response to Reform Party pressure, Marchi has proposed automatic HIV-testing for all immigrants and refugees. Not only is this policy totally inhumane and a human rights violation, it is an attack on the successful struggle for anonymous HIV-testing. More than this, it exposes the thin veneer of Canada's 'humanitarian' reputation and lays bare an immigration and refugee policy that is based on economic principles rather than humanitarian principles.



Changes to Citizenship

Back in April, Marchi proposed changing Canada's Citizenship Act so that children born in Canada to refugees and immigrants who are awaiting confirmation of their status would not have automatic citizenship. This is a key change from the tradition of *jus soli*, which confers citizenship by virtue of birth in the country and is a move to citizenship by virtue of descent from a citizen. We have seen the effect of the latter in countries such as Germany where the large numbers of non-citizen residents, many of whom are Turkish, have suffered brutal racist attacks in recent years.

So where is this path leading?

Marchi's actions have not shifted simply because he moved from opposition critic to government minister. His actions are taking place in a global context in which, increasingly, governments are closing their borders and restricting who is allowed in.

Germany has recently passed some of the most restrictive immigration policies in Europe and France's Interior Minister has proclaimed a goal of 'zero immigration'. Many European countries are getting together to 'harmonize' immigrant and refugee restrictions, in essence, to make movement of immigrants and refugees within Europe exceedingly difficult.

Clinton continues to flout international law by returning Haitians at sea who are fleeing persecution and he recently announced yet another strategy focusing on border control and enforcement to curb undocumented immigration.

Restricting the movement of people is in part due to the deep and long global recession. It is also about the changes that are happening in the global economy. Money and factories can be moved and transportation of goods can happen very quickly. In some cases it is easier to move factories to free trade zones and developing countries rather than bring workers here.

It is also about the scapegoating of immigrants and refugees in order to explain rising unemployment and the attacks on social programs happening not only in Canada but globally.

In this context, the terrain has shifted to the right and the politics of the Reform Party have a lot of influence. We need to see the Liberal policies for what they are and not kid ourselves that 'at least they are better than the Tories'.

Using his cover as an 'immigrant himself and friend to immigrants and refugees', Marchi is adept at playing the middle ground while he is in fact moving to implement a regressive immigration and refugee program. But this can change if we can build a strong movement of anti-racists, immigrants and refugees, trade unions and others to oppose the regressive immigration policies of this government.

public consultations

Deciding immigration policy into the next century

the stakes are high!

In February of this year, Immigration Minister Sergio Marchi announced public consultations that would produce an immigration policy framework for the next ten years. The stakes are high!

The consultations will end in November and the public has clearly been left out of this consultation process.

So who is creating this framework that will guide policy into the next century?

From the start, the process has been marked by meetings of a hand-picked few "experts", closed-door sessions, little media coverage and little information available for the general public.

At the same time Marchi, circumventing his own consultation process, introduced a slew of regressive immigration changes. (see *what's up Marchi?*)

A closed conference of "leading immigration authorities" was held in March 1994 to set the overall agenda for the consultations. "Expert panels" met and reported to the Minister at the end of August.

And the public? Well, Toronto got two and a half hours of consultation shared with the likes of the fascist Heritage Front. Only four other meetings were held to get the views of the rest of Canada.

This was the only opportunity for community input.

The consultation is taking place at a time of increased attacks on immigrants and refugees, by the government, in the media and on the street.

While we favour real democratic exchange on all issues of public policy, it is worrisome that those clamouring for a public debate on this issue tend to be right-wing voices arguing that we need to take the issue out of the hands of "special interest groups".

Immigrant and refugee communities must be central in any debate about the policies shaping their lives. Yet it is closed-door discussions, no money for community groups to organize their own consultations, little time to organize and a general lack of information that have been the key defining characteristics of the process.

deportations

Immigration policy focuses on deportations

· is the Public Security Ministry back?

The recent deaths of Georgina Leimonis and Constable Todd Baylis have become the focus for a media panic about so-called violent immigrant criminals. The Toronto Sun has been running a frenzied campaign that is nothing short of a lynch mob in print. A photo of a Jamaican-born suspect was headlined "Hang him." But a white immigrant convicted of murderering his wife, burning her and rototillering her ashes in the back yard—a man whose deportation order was stayed—somehow this escapes similar treatment.

The truth is that the rate of violent crime in Toronto has actually gone down.

In the wake of the media panic about violent immigrant criminals and before anyone has been convicted for the murder of Leimonis or Baylis, Immigration Minister Sergio Marchi moved in to make two sets of changes to procedures for deporting criminals born outside of Canada.

In June of this year, Marchi proposed fourteen changes, including limiting appeals of deportation orders and giving federal immigration officers the power to open international mail—powers of seizure that would undermine due process and the Charter of Rights.

Early in July, the Minister announced the formation of a task force of RCMP, local police and immigration officials to "track down and remove foreign criminals." He has since talked of setting up a "snitch line" and publishing a list of deportees.

The new police/immigration task force is the Ministry of Public Security under another name. When the Tories were in power, the Liberals decried Kim Campbell's move to create an ominous-sounding new department, the Ministry of Public Security, to deal with immigration. And when the Liberals came to power, they listened to protests from community organizations that immigration should not be treated as a public safety issue and, thus, abolished the Tory Ministry of Public Security. But typically, the Liberals are now behaving like Tories.

Setting immigration and refugee policy in response to isolated but high-profile crimes feeds the backlash against immigrants and refugees and does not address ongoing systemic problems. It also undermines the current public consultation process on immigration, a process which has received almost no attention in the media.

Many so-called immigrant criminals have grown up in Canada. Deporting people to their countries of birth, when they have spent most of their lives in this country, will not solve any problems.

The truth is that the rate of violent crime in Toronto has actually gone down. Shortly after Marchi's announcements, the Toronto Star published a front-page story on the decline of serious crime in this city. And the Globe and Mail ran a story on the low criminality rate among immigrants. But by then the damage had already been done: the racist backlash against immigrants and the right-wing law and order agenda were brought together in Marchi's policy changes.

TCAR says: The federal government should stop trying to out-Reform the Reform Party. Marchi and the media are scapegoating immigrants of colour for violent crime. Join with us in protesting the recent changes to deportation procedures. A law and order agenda must not be allowed to determine immigration policy.

a real example

CSIS and Immigration Canada single out Palestinian man

The case of Issam AlYamani

The Arab community suffers from racism rooted in a complicated but tenacious mix of racial, cultural, religious and political prejudices. Immigration and the refugee determination process are areas in which our community faces systemic racism.

A number of our community members have been singled out by the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB), acting upon recommendations from the Canadian Security Intelligence Services (CSIS). Issam AlYamani is one example.

Mr. AlYamani, a permanent resident of Canada since 1985, has never broken a Canadian law or committed any offence. Yet AlYamani has been denied citizenship based upon an unsubstantiated claim by CSIS that he is a "potential" threat to Canadian security.

Over the years, AlYamani has made no secret of his involvement in the National Palestinian Movement or his support for the humanitarian and social welfare agencies that assist Palestinians in the Occupied Territories. It is because of this that AlYamani is considered a "potential" threat by the IRB and CSIS.

Due to these allegations, AlYamani and his family face the imminent prospect of being stripped of their landed immigrant status and deported.

It is deplorable that Mr. AlYamani has been targeted by the previous Federal government for beliefs that many in our community share and for having exercised his basic civil liberties including his right to peaceful political activism, association and expression.

AlYamani has been denied citizenship based upon an unsubstantiated claim by CSIS that he is a "potential" threat to Canadian security.

At the legal level, the Canadian Arab Federation has been successful in obtaining intervenor status at the Federal Court hearing of AlYamani's case, along with the Canadian Civil Liberties Association. The hearing was held in mid-August and a decision is expected soon.

The case of AlYamani is precedent-setting and has serious repercussions not only for the Arab community but for all immigrant communities. The outcome of the Federal Court hearing might prompt legislative changes in the Immigration and the Security Services Acts.

The federation, in response to community concerns, has spearheaded the campaign to stop deportation proceedings against Issam AlYamani. Because AlYamani's case is only one among several we are aware of, the CAF hosted several community meetings with community academics, leaders and solidarity groups to discuss strategies and a course of action.

The resulting campaign has four prongs: a legal defence committee, education and media work, networking with sister groups and an inter-faith dialogue committee.

To date, several initiatives have been implemented in the campaign to halt the deportation of AlYamani and his family: an open letter to the Prime Minister of Canada signed by at least 60 professors and faculty members, a petition signed by thousands of Canadians, letters sent to the Immigration Minister and Solicitor General from unions, students, community groups, immigrant and refugee advocacy organizations and religious community leaders.

We urge you to keep a watchful eye on developments in this precedent-setting case. To extend your solidarity, please send a donation to the legal defence fund that has been set up to cover the astronomical legal costs.

The preceding article was written by the Canadian Arab Federation —a national organization for the Arab Canadian community. For more information on this campaign call CAF at (416) 231-7524.

SOLIDARITY

TORONTO COALITION AGAINST RACISM

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ACTIVIST CALENDAR

1994 – 1995

NOT SCAPEGOATING

KYO MACLEAR 94

police

Bigger guns, more money and greater powers

The police force and its most enthusiastic supporters have used recent high profile shootings in the city—that of Georgina Leimonis and police officer Todd Baylis—as a springboard for advancing a broader authoritarian and xenophobic agenda.

In the current climate of economic and social insecurity, there have been calls for greater resources and powers so the city's police force may enforce "law and order".

Metro police: Half a billion dollars and counting

Yet Toronto's police already have an annual budget of some $500 million, "public" money over which the public has virtually no control. And, there is no truly independent civilian board to investigate or control police activities. Those who do raise criticisms, such as chair of the Police Services Board Susan Eng, are increasingly greeted with a torrent of abuse for daring to challenge the image of a noble and even-handed police force.

But challenging that image is exactly what we should be doing. From an anti-racist point of view, the reasons for scepticism are many.

The real problem in Toronto over the last fifteen years has not been Black people (or anyone else) killing police officers but the reverse—police officers killing, beating and harassing Blacks and other people of colour. It has also emerged that the police also monitor and harass Black and anti-racist activists, sometimes in collaboration with leaders of the white supremacist Heritage Front.

Before the shooting death of Officer Baylis, there were two other police killings in the last year. The perpetrators were white and the killings took place in non-urban settings. Curiously, these acts did not receive the same coverage and political attention.

By elevating the Baylis shooting into a media and public spectacle, the police force and their supporters consciously played on the unfounded prejudices and irrational fears of the Canadian mainstream thus furthering their own interests and vision of the world.

In this undertaking, Metro Police have been neither alone nor lacking in funds. As always, the police were the unquestioned source for information on the killing. They were fully backed by the media and by the thousands of police force members from across North America who descended upon the city for the officer's funeral.

To top things off, the Metro Police have taken legal action against federal Immigration Minister Sergio Marchi with a lawsuit over the Baylis killing. This is part of their public campaign for tougher immigration policy. That the police–an armed, military-type organisation present in many aspects of our daily lives–can intervene so freely in political matters is a worrying sign for anyone interested in protecting the democratic fabric of Canadian society.

The police force is–and sees itself as–a constituency unto its own, which places the defence of its material and political interests above the interests of the society it is supposed to "serve and protect".

It has everything to gain from the creation of a siege mentality in the population. As a result, in spite of government statistics that show that there has been an actual reduction in violent crime and that immigrants are less to blame for crime than Canadian-born citizens, Metro Police persist in demanding more funds, less restrictions on their actions, and the publication of faulty "race-based" police statistics that blame Blacks and immigrant groups for crime. They want more powerful guns and greater freedom to use them.

This is not a time for false debates. It is not a question of being "pro-cop" or "anti-cop". It is one, however, of ensuring a few basic things: that the country's leaders do not shirk their own responsibilities to Canadian citizens by turning social, economic and political questions into police questions; that the police force not become a body of power unto itself, free to pursue their agenda oblivious to the concerns and well-being of all segments of the citizenry.

race-based statistics

Playing with numbers

Race stats are a deadly game

Every time a Black or Asian person is a suspect in a high-profile crime, there are new calls for the collection of race-based crime statistics. Somehow the people who want these stats never have much to say when the suspect is white—a Paul Bernardo, a Clifford Olson or a Marc Lepine. That's because the underlying assumption is that race stats will "prove" that people of colour, especially Blacks, commit the most crime.

Right after the murder of Georgina Leimonis in the *Just Desserts* cafe, Norm Gardner of the Police Services Board declared that Black people were the chief perpetrators of violent crime. Every time the police feel under attack - and they have developed a siege mentality in the wake of persistent criticism about police racism - they further fan the flames of racism and fear by blaming Blacks for crime.

And it's not just the police. Others have gotten into the act. At Georgina Leimonis' funeral, a Bishop called for race stats to find out "what is really going on in this country." A new and dangerous twist in the debate is that some, including Liberal MP John Bryden and Ottawa criminologist Thomas Gabor, want race stats linked to immigration policy. The sub-text here is that Jamaican-born Blacks are importing crime into Canada.

So what's wrong with race stats anyway? Could they not be used, as some people argue, to good purposes? No.

The very idea that race is relevant to crime is offensive. A hundred years ago, police measured the skulls of people to see if they were "born" criminals. At the beginning of this century, Toronto police collected stats on crimes committed by Jews. Race stats belong in the same category–the historical dustbin.

The collection of race stats also poses huge practical problems. For example:

• Not all crimes are reported, and that includes a lot of crimes committed by whites.

• Racist policing means that more people of colour than whites are likely to end up in the criminal justice system.

• There is no clear consensus on what "race" is anyway. Official attempts to categorize people in this way will lead us into a South-African style classification system.

At best, statistics tells us more about the police and the justice system than they do about crime. In a racist society, race-based statistics will be used for racist ends. TCAR is opposed to any attempts to collect crime stats according to race.

police state

Big Brother IS watching

From picking up your welfare cheque to riding the friendly skies, the government is policing our lives.

We know that all levels of the police–city and provincial police forces, the RCMP and CSIS–are getting involved in more and more aspects of our daily lives. But now, government policy is moving towards turning everyone from the local welfare officer to international airline staff into part-time cops.

Government divisions like welfare and immigration have been granted police-like powers for their own operations. To produce the famed federal report outlining supposed welfare abuse by the Somali community, welfare offices secretly video-taped clients picking up their cheques. The report was later found to be full of innuendos, generalizations and half-truths about the Somali community. Immigration is now working with local police and the RCMP to monitor immigrants and refugees who they deem to be criminals.

This approach to policing the population affects people of colour in various ways. A few examples:

Bill C-86

The Liberals promised to get rid of Tory-legislated Bill C-86 but have not done so. Aimed at preventing refugees from entering Canada, this legislation among other things has turned airlines and flight attendants into border police. Airline carriers that bring legitimate refugee claimants into the country can be hit with high fines if passengers don't have passports. Many refugees don't have this type of document because they are fleeing civil wars and states that are collapsing around them. People of colour will be the first targeted when decisions are made to determine whom to keep off of flights destined for Canada.

Young Offenders Act

As a response to the problems (unemployment, social dislocation, racism) leading to petty youth crime, the Liberals have introduced changes to the Young Offenders Act which make teenagers and pre-teens fair game for the police and the courts. There has been no hiding the fact that these changes are meant to target youth of colour, especially young Black men.

Deportations

The recent highly-publicized shootings in Toronto have led to calls for deportations by the local coroner, police force, politicians, media and right-wing public–largely because of the Jamaican origin of the suspects. But both men had come to Canada as children. The boundaries between Immigration Canada and ordinary citizens is now blurred with many feeling it is their right to say who should get deported.

Immigration officials

At the same time, Immigration officers have demanded bulletproof vests, even though there have been no reports of such officers being assaulted by gun-wielding immigrants.

CSIS and the Heritage Front

Recently, it has emerged that a key Heritage Front member, Grant Bristow, was on the payroll of CSIS, continuing a shameful tradition of collaboration between Canadian "intelligence" services and white supremacist far-right organisations. More findings emerge everyday that link this CSIS informant to spying on the Canadian Jewish Congress and leaking information to CSIS about the CBC.

Welfare offices

In 1993, a welfare office in Southern Ontario carried out surveillance including videotaping against the Somali community. This was in cooperation with local police, social services and the federal government in order to uncover a suspected "welfare fraud" ring.

Immigration Canada

Reforms to immigration policy announced by Immigration Minister Sergio Marchi in July 1994 set up a task force in which local police forces, the RCMP and the Ministry of Immigration would cooperate to deport foreign criminals. Similarly, there have been proposals to implement 1-800-snitch-lines allowing concerned citizens to call in reports on suspected "illegal" immigrants.

Let there be no mistake, turning Canada into a police state does not only affect foreign-born Canadians and Canadians from communities of colour. People living on welfare already face the scrutiny of welfare cops and can be "turned in" by other citizens through a snitch-line.

These measures are slowly chipping away at our basic civil rights, jeopardizing the future of democratic freedoms and privacy in Canada.

media

Media makes monsters of people of colour

When it comes to reporting on our communities, the corporate media are part of the problem

The scum is still here

THE ROT REMAINS

THE FILTH IS SPREADING

The above quotes look like bad lines in an X-rated violent movie. But they are not. These are headlines and sub-headlines right from **The Toronto Sun.** In each and every case, the subject referred to is a person of colour.

Gentleman robber back to jail

This was a sub-heading in a **Toronto Star** story (July 7, 1994). The article read, "Even his hold up notes were polite...He wrote ..Please give me large bills....There was no, ..Give me the money or I blow your head off...It was always please and thank you." The reporter was talking about Gary Peters, a middle-aged white man who had spent most of his adult life in prison. He was reported to have been involved in a spree of robbing banks and drugstores in Newmarket, Alberta and Toronto after he was released from a penitentiary. Mr. Peters' story was tucked away on page twenty in a small column towards the bottom of the page. There was no photo anywhere of Mr. Peters. But what kind of coverage would have occurred had Mr. Peters been Black?

We do not raise these incidents to ask for a better description of alleged Black criminals. We raise these issues to expose the frightening level of racism in our media. When it comes to tackling racism, the mainstream media are part of the problem and have nothing to do with the solution.

The constant argument of reporters and their editors is that they only report what is happening out there and that they do not create the events they report about. This is hogwash. The media make a lot of choices. They decide who they will interview, what they will report and how much emphasis to give each aspect of an event.

Take the case of Clinton Gayle, the man now facing charges for shooting a police officer. The media reported that Mr. Gayle shot and killed Constable Todd Baylis after the officers chased him into a room in a high-rise apartment.

When this was reported, there was pandemonium everywhere. A Black man–a deportee at that–had killed a hard-working white police officer who came from a proud family of police officers. The family of Todd Baylis became regular features in the media frenzy that ensued. Queen's Park ordered the flag to be flown at half-mast. It was mainly the police perspective of the shooting that reached the public.

The fact that Mr. Gayle was facing a deportation order made the situation even more explosive. The media reminded us that had Gayle been deported, the police officer would still be alive. The image the media painted was that of alien dark-skinned immigrants coming into the country and tearing everything apart, including killing police officers.

So what is wrong with the media's coverage? Just about everything.

First, the media forgot to mention that in the last year there have been two other police officers killed in Ontario–one in Minden last July and the other in Sudbury last October. In both cases, the accused are white men. Most of us have never heard about these cases and the media sure didn't use them to create public outrage.

Secondly, everything the police officers said was taken as unquestionable truth. The same thing happens whenever the cops shoot and kill Black people. The police tell their story and talk about the trauma they are undergoing after shooting people. We never hear the story of the victims of police violence. In the case of Gayle, why didn't we hear about his family or friends or about how he was shot?

Contrast this picture to the report about Paul Bernardo, the accused serial killer and rapist. When Bernardo's case came up, the police had their say but we also got Bernardo's life in minute detail down to his wedding pictures. **The Toronto Sun** released a five-page special report on Paul Bernardo to commemorate the 30th birthday of the accused killer (Sun, Aug. 24, 1994).

The media also uses a racist framework when talking about other news and issues that affect people of colour. Stories on immigration are one example.

In one of the few public forums on the immigration debate attended by Immigration Minister Sergio Marchi, Toronto fascist groups and their allies were in attendance. When Wolfgang Droege, leader of the Heritage Front, approached the microphone there was a rush of TV reporters scrambling for space with all cameras focused on the Nazi leader.

Unfortunately for the media and fortunately for progressives, forum organizers switched the mikes and allowed a woman of colour to speak first. All of a sudden the cameras were turned off as disappointed journalists waited for Droege's turn. The woman raised criticisms about Bill C-86 and received a thunderous response from the floor but the following day all that appeared in the media was the story of Wolfgang Droege and his adventures at the forum.

Apart from this obvious media manipulation, media racism takes many forms. One form has the media using dubious statistics and incorrect information mainly provided by government agencies. The coverage of Immigration Canada's intelligence report on the Somali community is one example. The report used faulty evidence and generalizations and concluded that the Somali community en masse was engaged in large-scale welfare fraud to finance what the report called "tribal warfare in Somalia".

Ontario Liberal leader Lyn McLeod waved this document in the provincial legislature while calling for a crackdown against the Somali community and welfare abusers.

The media quickly pounced on the document and, for a couple of months, many immigrants and refugees were reduced to defending themselves against the manufactured lies of the government that were being spread as truth by the media. Kids were being harassed in schools and many refused to go back for some time because they just couldn't take it any more. When the government later acknowledged that the document was a bogus report, the damage had already been done.

After the shooting at *Just Desserts*, the media painted an image of a city under siege where everybody was at risk of being shot by lunatic Black men on the rampage. Many Black youth were scared even of going out. As soon as you walked into the subway, every eye turned on you. On one occasion at the Bathurst subway station, an elderly white woman confronted a Black woman sitting down waiting for the train. The white woman was waving a copy of **The Toronto Sun** with a huge photograph of the alleged suspect on the cover. The white woman kept shouting, "Now you see, you see what you people have done, you see what is going on."

Racism and the anti-immigrant campaign in this country are part of a multi-faceted agenda. At the bottom of it is a bankrupt political system that has no new ideas and solutions to offer to its people. Fascist groups and media racism are products of a tired political agenda that seems to be taking the country deeper and deeper into social and economic chaos.

What can we do to address media racism?

Hold the corporate media accountable by monitoring them regularly, challenge them through letters and demonstrations and learn to deconstruct and critique their messages.

We need media that accurately reflects our diverse lives and allows us to communicate with each other in compassionate and respectful ways. We have to control, run, operate, work in and participate in our own community-based media. That means not only getting involved in the myriad of alternative papers, fanzines, community radio stations, cable TV, computer networks and magazines out there but also continuing to create media vehicles that represent our own struggles, histories and stories.

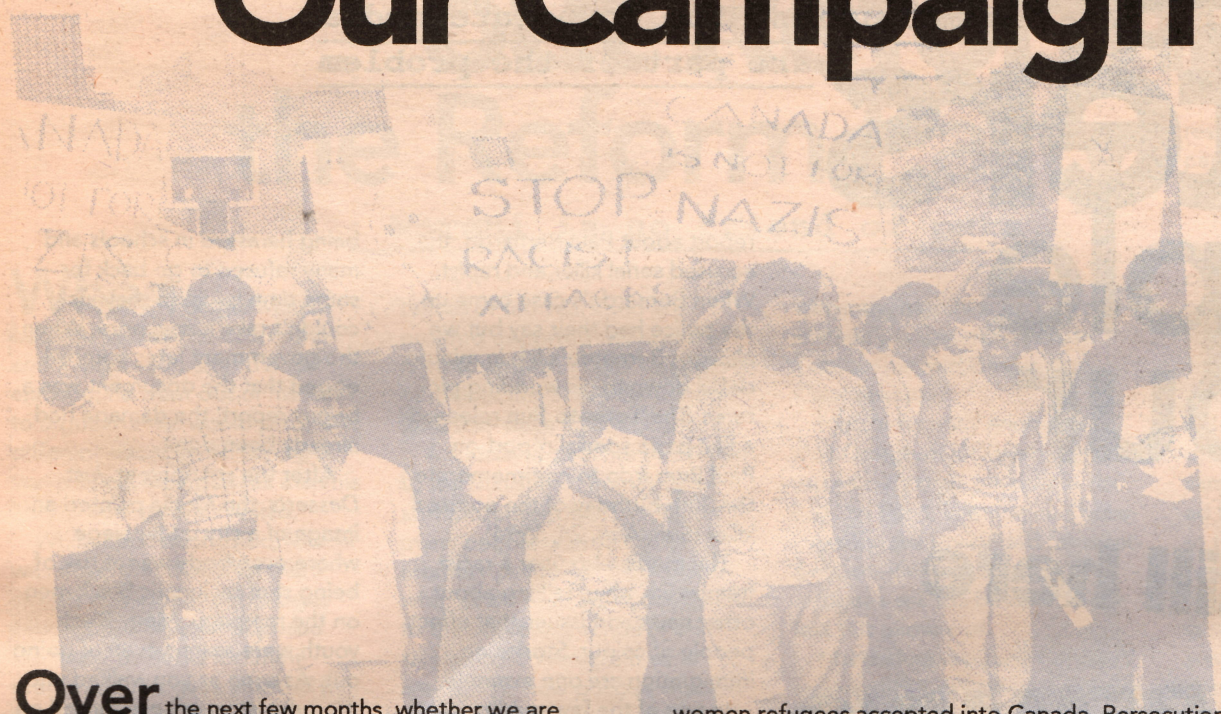
So what is wrong with the media's coverage?

Just about everything.

Strategy

Solidarity not Scapegoating: Our Campaign

· Bringing the issues together



Over the next few months, whether we are organizing demonstrations against regressive changes to immigration policy, holding forums on the impact of the racism in our lives, calling community meetings to address emergency situations or just building the anti-racist struggle in this city, "solidarity not scapegoating" will be our rallying cry.

Here are some components of TCAR's campaign.

Abolish Bill C-86 measures

This bill has been in effect for over a year and its main goal is to deter refugees from Canada by extending power to low-level immigration officials, airline staff and officials in other countries. Fingerprinting and photographic identification are part of a policy which treats people as criminals and discourages them from fleeing misery and political upheaval. The provisions of Bill C-86 need to be abolished.

Increase commitment to refugees

The number of refugees accepted into Canada continues to decline. Marchi's refugee target levels announced this year were 35% less than the Tories' announcements the year before. We demand a stronger commitment to refugee protection.

Women constitute an absolute majority of the world's refugees but this is not reflected in the number of women refugees accepted into Canada. Persecution against women, whether it is abuse, violence or systemic discrimination, needs to be addressed in the refugee determination process.

Persecution based on sexual orientation needs to be included in the definition of a refugee.

Also, the so-called amnesty Marchi announced in July to deal with rejected refugees has so many barriers in place (minimum six month work requirement; not a "burden" on the health care or social service system; or have a criminal record) that it is almost impossible for most refugees to qualify. We want these barriers removed.

The government must commit itself to supporting refugees whether they fall under the narrowly-defined UN Convention on Refugees definition or not.

No mandatory HIV testing

Marchi has suggested that all immigrants and refugees be tested for HIV infection. TCAR opposes mandatory HIV testing because it violates an individual's civil rights. We oppose the rejection of any immigrant or refugee based on their HIV status.

Expand the "family class"

Currently, there are restrictions on sponsoring independent or married *children* under the "family class" definition. Marchi has also raised the possibility of further restrictions on the sponsorship of *parents* of married and independent children. We not only oppose these restrictions but believe that extended families (the norm for most of the Third World) and lesbian and gay families should be included in the definition of "family".

Citizenship

Marchi has proposed changing Canada's Citizenship Act so that children born in Canada to refugees and immigrants still waiting for their status would not have automatic citizenship. We demand that citizenship be a right for everyone in this country, not a privilege.

Drop Bill C-44 - Stop the Deportations!

In June, Marchi proposed fourteen changes including limiting appeals against deportation orders and giving federal immigration officers the power to open international mail. Bill C-44 will be introduced in the House this Fall. This bill should be dropped.

Disband the taskforce

In July 1994, Marchi established a taskforce of RCMP, local police and immigration officials to "track down and remove foreign criminals." We oppose criminalizing immigration by bringing it into the realm of "policing" and "public security".

No snitchline

Marchi has hinted that he may implement a "snitchline" where the public would be invited to report on people evading deportation orders. In the current climate of anti-immigrant backlash, this move could have ugly consequences and lead to the harassment of innocent individuals.

Stop the scapegoating of the Black community

Following the murders of Leimonis and Baylis, the entire Black community was subject to racist portrayals and abuse in the media. The federal government's recent moves implicitly rely on that old racist standby—"Black criminality"—for their power. We strongly resist any attempt to stigmatize the Black community or any other community as the "criminals".

Note: These changes around deportations have occurred in a climate of exaggerated estimates on crime levels with the Canadian Police Association claiming up to 3,000 foreign-born criminals "on the loose". In August 1994, Marchi finally admitted that the number was actually around 127 people (Globe and Mail, August 3, 1994).

The real problem

in this country today–deepening economic crisis and joblessness–is not any different from what is happening in other G-7 countries. The crisis in the rest of the world is even more devastating. In the West, social and economic rights like Medicare, UI benefits, old age pensions and many other rights won by working people over the past decades of struggle are under constant threat.

The "solutions" being offered by various levels of government and their business counterparts worsen the problems. Free trade, for example, was supposed to improve our economy, boost our exports and get people jobs. Instead, the opposite has happened. The neo-conservative agenda of the Mulroney era has proved an outright failure. The Liberals, as expected, have nothing really new to offer. Their biggest economic debate right now seems to be what new name to give the GST. Cuts to food, clothing and housing allowances for non-Convention refugees; placing the burden of sponsorship breakdown on those sponsored; cuts to OHIP for international students and a general lack of jobs and affordable housing –this is the treatment that refugees and immigrants are facing.

Social and economic uncertainty has revived the worst forms of racism and anti-immigrant hysteria as people grapple to find something to blame. TCAR believes we have to put an end to the scapegoating of refugees and immigrants and face the real problems of the day. The debate on immigration should be focused on looking at the global economic and political situations that create migration, as well as improving resettlement, establishing a fair and just refugee system and addressing practical needs such as education and training for new immigrants.

People need jobs. They need food and good shelter. The Canadian government has a responsibility to define its commitment to all the people of this country. Is it too much to ask that the resources of this country be utilized to meet the needs of the people instead of providing limitless profits to a privileged few? We have to face all these issues and put forward a clear commitment to guarantee everybody in this country basic social and economic rights.

Yes I want to join the Toronto Coalition Against Racism. I am interested in the following:

- ☐ general meetings
- ☐ outreach committee
- ☐ refugee and immigrant rights
- ☐ fundraising
- ☐ other _____

Yes I want more copies of *Solidarity not Scapegoating* for my friends, organization and community. Please send me _____ copies. Copies are free but please send a donation to cover mailing costs.

Yes I want to order the snazzy TCAR "Resist Racism" t-shirts. Here is $ _____ for _____ t-shirts. (Each t-shirt is $13 - this includes postage, and all taxes)

Yes I would like to financially support TCAR and its anti-racist work. Here is $_____ to help with your campaigns.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____

FAX _____

Please make cheques payable to the **Toronto Coalition Against Racism.**

Mail this form to: TCAR, Box 133, 339a College St., Toronto, ON, M5T 1S2

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Solidarity not Scapegoating

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What is TCAR?

TCAR is a coalition of over 50 community-based anti-racist and social justice organizations. TCAR unites many individuals and communities in a common struggle against racism and fascism. Our aim is to build a broad, mass-action coalition which will represent and be lead by the communities targetted by racism and fascism.

Our meetings are open and all those interested in building the anti-racist movement are welcome.

Call the TCAR Infoline at 530-0262 for more information.

Our mailing address is:
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Immigration · Criminality · The Real